Navy/Marine Corps Installation Restoration (IR) Partnering in Virginia

A Bridge to Successful Cleanup

Cleaning contaminated sites at military installations can be difficult, both scientifically and logistically. Some planning and execution problems arise from the varied policies of the multiple organizations involved in the cleanup process-the Navy, (including the Atlantic Division and the Engineering Field Activity Chesapeake of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command as well as the Navy installation), the Navy's consultants, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), and Region III of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Until the mid-1990s, these parties lacked flexibility and sufficient concern for each other's organizational goals. The resultant "us-them" mindset created a sometimes tense and often counterproductive working relationship. Clearly, there had to be a better way.

Building the Bridge

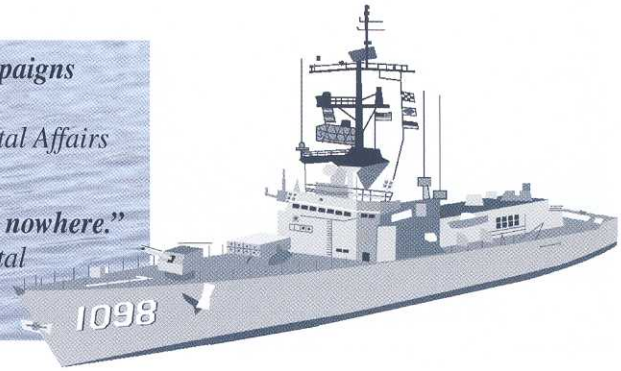
Was there a solution? Used by the construction industry since the 1980s, Partnering is a process based on the premise that collaborative decision making is essential to success in complex situations. In the Virginia-Navy IR Program, partnering was first used on a limited basis in 1992 to resolve issues surrounding the initiation of a Federal Facilities Agreement for the Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Yorktown. Based on this initial success, a formal partnering process began at NWS Yorktown in 1995. Since then, the number of Tier I teams has grown to seven responsible for managing the cleanup programs at nine military installations that have resulted in significant time and cost savings.

What is Partnering?

Partnering is a process that brings key players together to work as a team to achieve mutually beneficial goals. The relationship is based on trust, dedication to common goals, and an understanding of each team member's individual expectations and values. The common goal is to protect human health and the environment while reducing cleanup cost and time. This brochure discusses the use of partnering principles by the VDEQ, EPA Region III, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and their consultants to investigate and cleanup former disposal sites.

"In the beginning, the process consisted of letter writing campaigns and posturing that was adversarial and nonproductive."
Bruce Frizzell, Head of the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Branch at Marine Corps Base Quantico

"It was an adversarial relationship and the process was going nowhere."
Mike Tilchin, project manager for CH2M HILL, an environmental consultant for the Navy.



How Does Partnering Work?

Partnering develops communication and trust among participants, thereby discouraging competitive or adversarial relationships. Team members take joint responsibility for maintaining and nurturing the partnering relationship. Partnering also promotes the open exchange and consideration of new ideas to avoid tunnel vision and such responses as "that's the way we have always done it".

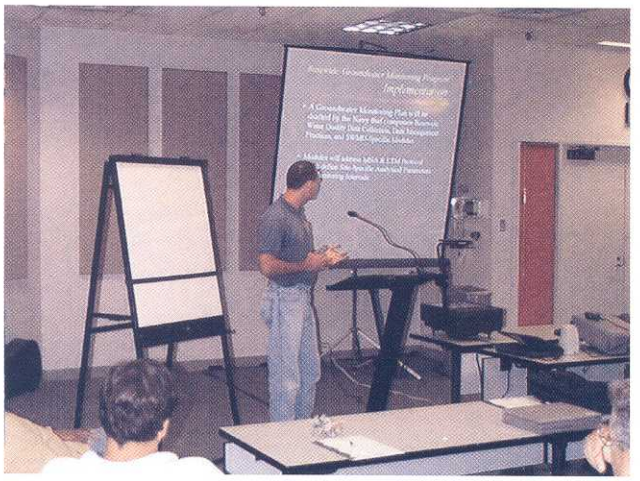
Each organization also empowers its team representatives to conduct daily business to resolve most issues and problems at the level where they occur. Management involvement should be a last resort.

What is the Investment?

You can't just throw people in a room and expect great results. There is an investment in training. The trust, communication, and meeting-management skills necessary for effective partnering are learned through formal training sessions and professionally facilitated team meetings. Effective partnering also requires regularly scheduled meetings to keep the process moving and to resolve any issues quickly.

The training pays off as teams develop their partnering skills and are able to self-facilitate their meetings. Self-facilitated teams are better equipped to continue the streamlined cleanup process at their bases. Six of the seven installation partnering teams in Virginia have developed the skills to be self-facilitated. By the end of 2002, all of the teams will be self-facilitated.

Investments are also made in opportunities for the teams to share with one another, especially, their success stories and lessons learned. Opportunities include a website and Joint Partnering Teams meetings (approximately every two years). The joint meetings also provide a forum for discussion and training on current issues.



Tier 1 team presentation at the November 1999 Joint Partnering Team Meeting meeting.

"When you build relationships with people it helps with the problem solving; they know what your bottom line is and you know what their bottom line is."

Bob Stroud, Project Manager at EPA Region III

"Partnering has played a tremendous role in the successful IR program at Naval Station Norfolk. (The) team was able to resolve numerous issues, bring the study to a close, get a Record of Decision written and signed, and have a $2 million remediation project designed, awarded and completed; all within 3 years. There are many other successes attributable to partnering, but the time and cost savings realized on this one project alone has justified the partnering effort.

Randy Jackson, a Remedial Project Manager with the Atlantic Division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command

Success Stories

Good news is being heard about partnering and Navy/Marine cleanups in Virginia!

Prior to partnering, closure of a ***Naval Station Norfolk*** landfill, previously used for disposal of sandblast and construction waste, had come to a standstill with unresolved capping issues. The trust and communication skills developed through partnering enabled the team to jointly scope the project and break through the roadblock. An estimated 1 to 2 years was saved in document review time and in resolving the technical approach. Approximately $3.5 million in construction costs were saved by an alternate cap design.

At the ***NWS Yorktown***, the Navy estimates that partnering has cut project execution times and cost up to 50 percent. The use of innovative technologies like active biological treatment of contaminated soils and natural attenuation to address residual pollution have reduced costs an estimated $3 million.

Activities at various sites have also included additional improvements to enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitat. These included the creation of wetlands and riparian forest buffers, and the planting of native species. In recognition of their accomplishments, NWS Yorktown won the FY 1999 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Award for Environmental Cleanup at a Navy installation.

Since 2000, the improved levels of trust and cooperation developed through partnering has enabled the team at

Construction of a bioremediation cell at NWS Yorktown to treat soil contaminated with explosives and chlorinated solvents by an innovative technology.

Quantico Marine Corps Base to expedite initial review of numerous sites and potential areas of concern. Improved relationships have also resulted in up-front joint scoping that minimizes the multiple document review that had occurred in the past. Estimated workplan and other project savings now approximate $750,000.

> ***"Shared common goals and building trust along the way has helped the cleanup process immensely. I only wish we could have started (partnering) sooner."***
>
> *Ryan Mayer, Remedial Project Manager with the Navy's Engineering Field Activity Chesapeake*

The ***Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren (NSWC)*** used partnering to tackle a challenging landfill remediation project (Site 9). Installation of a slurry wall, excavating a sediment basin, installing a marsh cap and screening for unexploded ordnance and consolidated waste were among the issues to be addressed. The partnering team resolved these and various unexpected construction surprises to complete the project on schedule and within budget.

The New Gosport Landfill project at the ***Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY)*** is another example of the exciting results possible through partnering. This project involved the removal of abrasive blast material containing paint chips from Navy and private property. Screening of

Creation of a wetland and marsh cap at the Site 9 landfill on NSWC Dahlgren.

the soil/blast mixture removed extraneous material (concrete, wood, etc.) and stabilization with fertilizer reduced disposal cost by more than $1.4 million. The local community was involved through the whole project by participation in Restoration Advisory Board meetings and Navy distribution of project status fact sheets and flyers. The excellent communication and coordination achieved by the team also included the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Elizabeth River Project. This allowed the remedial design to incorporate the creation of 1.9 acres of new wetlands along Paradise Creek and still realize significant overall project savings. NNSY won the 2001 Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Award for Environmental Restoration at a US Navy installation.

A Tiered Approach

The Navy, Marine Corps, EPA Region III and VDEQ coordinate cleanups at Virginia installations through

Dedication ceremony for a wetlands created by the New Gosport Landfill closure at Norfolk Naval Shipyard. "Princess" Elizabeth, a spokesperson of the Elizabeth River Project attending.

three different tiers (levels) of partnering teams. At each tier, participants contribute expertise and resources to achieve common goals and provide installations with tools to effectively address cleanup.

Tier I teams include individuals representing the installation's environmental office; the Navy (or Marine Corps), State and EPA project managers; contractor staff; and technical specialists. By meeting regularly to develop strategies, evaluate studies, and decide and execute required remedies they improve the quality and consistency of actions taken at the installation.

Tier II teams are made up of program managers that mirror Tier I representatives. Their primary role is to support Tier I teams by resolving issues raised by Tier I, discussing new guidance & policy, providing clarification and guidance, and addressing technical concerns. Policy conflicts that can't be resolved at the Tier II level are elevated to Tier III.

Tier III consists of senior level managers responsible for key environmental policy, programming and budgeting decisions. These managers work together to resolve potential differences in organizational policies and goals that might hinder the progress of Tier I and II. Tier III also assists in making sure resources are available for Tier I and II and are able to share ideas and resources across Virginia.

The Future

Since 1992, the Navy, Marine Corps, EPA, VDEQ, and their contractors have been successfully implementing partnering and using facilitation skills to streamline the IR process to expedite cleanups. All agencies agree that the partnering process should continue. By helping the teams to function well, the successes have been significant and all involved, including agencies' management, believe the effort is worth the investment.

The success of the partnering process to facilitate conflict resolution and maintain program progress has prompted the agencies to form specific partnering teams to solve unique technical and policy challenges. The first facilitated team is an ecological workgroup that has been established to identify and resolve issues that challenge ecological risk assessments at the bases. Based on the initial success of this team, future formation of partnering teams with specific assignments and specified time periods to resolve unique issues will continue.

"I want to commend everyone involved for their spirit of cooperation. When the tough questions were asked everyone said 'why not' instead of why'."

Walter Priest of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, about the New Gosport Landfill Closure

"Through partnering, EPA, VADEQ, the Navy and Marine Corps strive for the best collaborative decision regarding cleanup action to take at each site. This approach avoids delays, unnecessary costs and potential misunderstandings in communication within the activity teams. Partnering is an outcome versus output driven process focused on progress to complete site cleanups under the Navy's IR program. All the agencies are committed to get to site close-out as a common goal using partnering to expedite the complex decisions necessary to cleanup past contamination."
- Paul Rakowski, Head of Environmental Programs Branch for the Atlantic Division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

For More Information

Contact the Navy/Marine Corps installation environmental coordinator or EPA/VDEQ remedial project manager. You may also direct comments to:

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